

August 27, 2012 Public Hearing Summary
5:00 – 7:00 pm
Feasibility and Planning Study Committee
Council Bluffs, Iowa

Approximately 250-plus people attended the public hearing. A volleyball game happening in the building resulted in people coming and going during the meeting.

Forty-four individuals registered to give comments. There were 39 who spoke. Of the 39 presenters:

- 8 were parents
- 20 were Deaf
- 19 were hearing
- 1 was blind
- 3 were current ISD students

Main points of presenters at public hearing:

1. Keep ISD open.
2. Mainstream experience was challenging
 - Socially isolating experience
 - Students were bullied
 - Mainstreaming does not provide a critical mass of deaf and hard of hearing/peers
 - It is important to have peers that communicate as you do

Additional comments:

ISD

- Provides academic excellence
- Feeling of belonging
- Gave me confidence
- Friends - "I have friends here."
- Students were behind when they came from mainstream
- Opportunity for involvement in sports and extra-curricular activities
- Provides accommodations and technology to enhance visual learning
- Provides LRE- Language Rich Environment
- Has improved lives of multiply handicapped children
- Equipped people to go to college and have their own business
- Provides certified teachers
- Holds accreditation from CEASD (one of only 25 schools in the nation)

Language and Communication at ISD

- "I learned sign language here."
- No communication barriers
- Language immersion all day long
- Direct teaching without an interpreter
- Information is always missed when an interpreter is used
- There is an interpreter shortage nationally and statewide

Moved to access services at ISD

- Three (3) families

General Comments

- ISD is embedded in the community
- ISD provides a positive economic impact for the community
- “Who defines what success is?” I was considered a success in the mainstream. I could talk, but was socially isolated. I learned sign language as an adult
- ISD Foundation monies could be used to support services
- Use money from casinos to support services
- Look at total development of the child including physical, emotional, social, academic
- “Don’t take away our culture.”
- Early language is important
- Services can be enhanced when states partner services for deaf and hard of hearing with blind and visually impaired
- Residential is cheaper than mainstream
- Don’t combine Blind and Visually impaired with Deaf and Hard of Hearing; both populations have very different service needs
- ISD is vital and provides critical services
- Responsibility to serve both populations of students
- Don’t have meetings at the AEA
- No other center based programs in Western Iowa
- Residential component is helpful in providing extra teaching, language enhancement beyond school hours
- AEA teachers should be required to show proficiency in ASL
- Consider quality and accountability in your recommendations
- Learn from others by bringing in national experts